

FRANK READE



WEEKLY MAGAZINE,

Containing Stories of Adventures on Land, Sea & in the Air.

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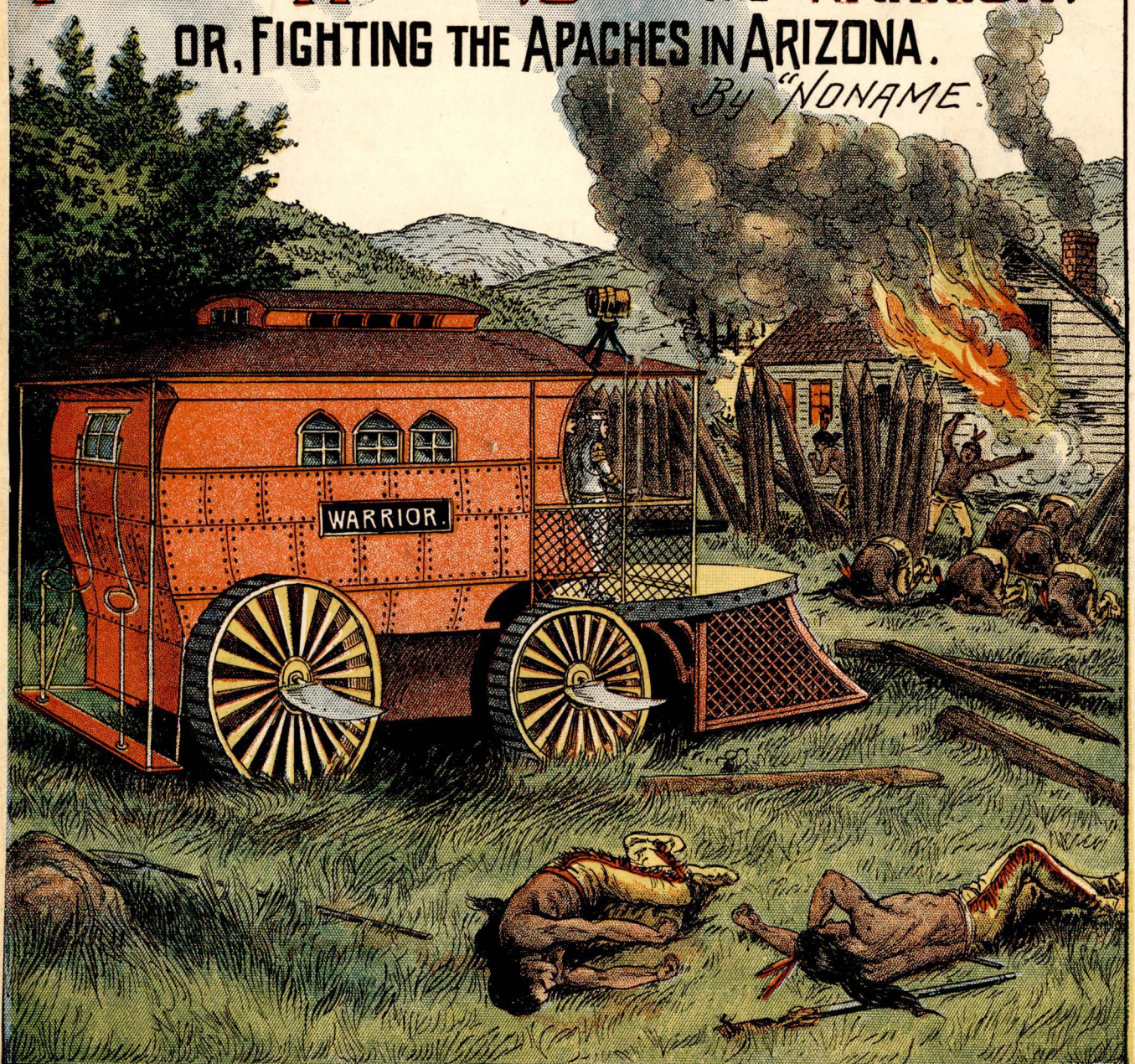
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NEW YORK, DECEMBER 26, 1902.

Price 5 Cents.

FRANK READE, JR.'S ELECTRIC INVENTION THE "WARRIOR!" OR, FIGHTING THE APACHES IN ARIZONA.

By "NONAME."



The savages had just caught sight of the Warrior. It had a curious effect upon them. Instead of retreating, they cast themselves in a body upon the ground. Frank could not help a smile.

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Frank Reade, Jr.'s Electric Invention, "The Warrior"

OR,

FIGHTING THE APACHES IN ARIZONA.

By "NONAME."

CHAPTER I.

PURSUED BY APACHES.

Far out upon a Western prairie a man was galloping along at a rapid rate, mounted upon the back of a fine mustang.

He was a man of commanding figure, dark, clear-cut features, and a drooping mustache.

He was dressed in the buckskin suit of a scout and wore wide sombrero. In general his appearance did not greatly differ from that of the ordinary Western plainsman. But his manner was that of alarm and keen anxiety.

As he rode he rose at times in his stirrups scanning the horizon closely. Then he put spurs to his horse and rode on faster than ever.

"It 'pears to me," he muttered after a time, "that it's mighty queer that I don't see any sign of that fort. It can't be that I'm off the track, fer as sure as my name are Lariat Luke I'm on the right course."

Lariat Luke, for this was the sobriquet the rider had given himself, sat down deeper in the saddle.

He plied the spur and dashed on.

Mile after mile the tireless mustang galloped on over prairie roll and level expanse.

But still the same vast unbroken plain lay upon every side.

But after a time a faint dark line began to appear upon the horizon.

The scout uttered a sharp cry of joy.

"Timber!" he cried. "We shall make it, boy. Keep up!"

The faithful horse seemed to understand his master's words completely, for with a neigh of apparent comprehension it quickened its stride.

Nearer the timber drew every moment.

And now a new complication arose.

Suddenly from below a roll in the plain not more than a half mile distant there appeared a number of riders.

The long lances, the waving plumes, even at that distance told Lariat Luke the truth.

They were the Apaches, those dread savages of the plains, who are such a terror to the traveling white man, the cowboy, the hunter or the scout.

To fall into their hands was certainly equivalent to death. Lariat Luke's face paled.

"Great guns!" he gasped. "Apaches, an' a hull army of 'em. This is a pesky close shave fer me. I had better cut."

There was no doubt about it.

But the scout was for a moment puzzled to know just what point to start for.

"If I only knew the exact spot on yonder horizon where the fort is," he muttered, "I'd strike fer it."

But the darkness was fast coming on and objects in the distance were dim.

What was to be done?

There seemed but one way and that was to proceed at random.

So he struck out at full speed.

Even at that distance their derisive, fierce yell was heard.

The scout's blood turned chill, even in spite of himself.

But he kept his mustang on the jump.

Darkness was settling down rapidly.

On went the race.

Lariat Luke's horse seemed to hold his own quite well.

"I only hope that darkness will come before they can gain on me," muttered Luke. "I may be able to give them the slip yet."

This was the scout's only hope. He knew well what his fate would be if overtaken by the dreaded Apaches.

There was nothing too cruel for them to inflict upon a captive. Torture most awful was their delight.

So Lariat Luke made the strongest efforts possible to elude his dread pursuers.

He kept his horse on the jump, nursing him carefully, however, and gradually the pall of night thickened.

The horse—noble animal—responded gallantly to the call upon him. The Apaches did not seem to be gaining.

Finally the darkness became thicker. Hope now seemed firm-seated in the breast of the fleeing white man.

But suddenly an unfortunate accident happened.

The horse stepped in a gopher hole and stumbled. The rider shot over his head.

Sprawling upon the prairie lay the unfortunate scout.

He was for a moment stunned and oblivious of what was going on about him.

Then he roused himself.

Scrambling to his feet in a dazed manner, he saw the faithful horse limping about the plain.

It needed but a glance for Lariat Luke to see that the animal was past use.

His leg was broken, and he could hardly limp around on three legs.

In spite of his peril the scout's heart went out to the horse.

But there was nothing that could be done for the poor animal.

Death was close upon him, and realizing this, he seized

his rifle and sank down upon one knee, peering into the gloom, and resolved to sell his life as dearly as possible.

He could hear the thunder of hoofs coming toward him.

The forms of the Apaches became visible, and acting upon inspiration, he began rapidly firing.

Of course, this attracted the attention of the Apaches toward him.

They came down upon him now full tilt, firing their rifles and yelling like demons.

In the gloom their shadowy forms went circling about him in a death circle.

Closer it drew. The scout had received three slight wounds. The bullets were flying about him like hail.

It was plain that he could not hope to long escape being struck in a vital spot. Doggedly he worked his repeating Winchester.

But at the last moment, and when death seemed certain, a strange thing happened.

There was a thunderous trembling of the ground, and down through the darkness there rushed a mighty black monster.

It was in shape something like a car, with windows blazing with light, and as it thundered down upon the Apaches there was a puff of smoke, a roar and terrific explosion, and the air became filled with flying debris and the bodies of luckless Apaches.

The strange apparition did not come in the scout's direction. Nor was he near enough to be injured by the explosion.

In less time than it takes to tell it all was over.

The Apaches were scattered in terror, and the car disappeared in the darkness. Just at that moment the scout saw a riderless horse coming toward him and he caught its bridle.

In a moment he was upon its back.

"Great beavers!" he cried. "What under the sun was that? It beats anything I ever heard of. For a moment I didn't know but that it was a locomotive astray from the track, but thar ain't no railroad track within five hundred miles of here."

But there was no use in wasting further time cogitating over the mystery.

The car was gone from sight, and at any moment the scattered Apaches might return.

So Lariat Luke again set his course and rode away into the night.

Two hours later he topped a rise in the prairie and saw lights in the distance.

A cheer broke from his lips.

He knew that they were the lights of the fort of which he was in quest.

"Fort High Rock!" he cried joyfully. "At last!"

As he drew nearer he was soon able to distinguish the outlines of the fort.

There was the stockade and the barracks, and suddenly he saw a light in the grass just ahead of him, and a voice cried:

"Halt! Who comes there?"

It was a picket guard, and the scout pulled in his horse.

"A friend," he replied.

"Can you give the countersign?"

"No."

"Then you can go no further in this direction," said the guard.

"Wall, p'raps not," said the scout, bluntly; "but I tell ye I must see Lieutenant Clarke at once!"

"The lieutenant is asleep. Come around in daylight."

"No, by thunder!" cried the scout, forcibly. "A good many human lives depend upon seeing him now. Call the corporal's guard an' send for him!"

The guard laughed.

"You're mighty fine to give off orders!" he cried. "Anybody would think you was the lieutenant himself."

"Look yere, man!" cried the scout, forcefully, "there is no use in palaverin' about it. There's a dozen human lives at stake, and I must see the lieutenant at once."

The guard hesitated.

"Lives at stake, you say?"

"Yes!"

"What's the matter?"

"Apaches!"

"Well, who's in trouble?"

"Ye'll find out when I see the lieutenant."

"Who are you?"

"Wall, I'm Lariat Luke. I've been here afore, I reckon."

A sharp cry broke from the sentry's lips.

"Lariat Luke, the scout?"

"Yas!"

"Dismount and come up here until I can see your face. I recognize the voice. Do you know me?"

The scout dismounted and approached within the radius of light from the fire.

"Jim Kelley!"

"Luke!"

They gripped hands. Each was well known to the other. The scout was a frequent visitor to the fort.

"I didn't know you in the darkness, Luke."

"All right, Jim. I must see the lieutenant at once."

"Go right up to the fort. Mike will see to your horse. I'll lead to see you, Luke."

The scout hurried away toward the fort. At the palisade gate he was met by another sentry who quickly admitted him.

A messenger was at once sent to Lieut. Clarke's sleeping room to arouse him.

The scout waited in the little cabin which was used as headquarters on the parade ground.

In less than twenty minutes a tall, straight form came across the parade ground.

A handsome young man in the United States uniform stepped into the cabin.

"Luke!" he exclaimed, gripping the scout's hand. "Glad to see you!"

"The same, lieutenant!"

"What can I do for you?"

"I want three hundred men at once, lieutenant. Thar's lively times up in the Los Pesos Hills!"

"What? Not at the Ranch Above the Clouds?"

"Jes' so, lieutenant."

A sharp, agonized cry escaped the handsome young officer's lips. He sprang forward and grasped the scout's arm.

CHAPTER II.

THE ELECTRIC WARRIOR.

Lieut. Clarke's manner was one of great excitement.

"Tell me the worst, Luke!" he said, huskily; "has harm come to her?"

"You mean to Miss Alma Dane?"

"Yes—yes!"

"Wall, sir, I left 'em well, she an' her father, but the ranch is surrounded by full three thousand Apaches, under Black Cloud and Long Lance."

"Black Cloud and Long Lance!" gasped the lieutenant.

"Long Lance, as I have learned, is not an Indian, but a renegade white man named Benton Vance. He has fallen in love with Alma and has sworn to have her for his bride!"

"An' I mought say further that he seems likely to do it, lieutenant."

"Never! Call out a thousand men, Sergeant Pray; order the reveille sounded. Call the men to arms. We must start at once for the Ranch Above the Clouds."

"I'd advise ye not to start until daylight, lieutenant."

"Why?"

"For many reasons. Ye won't gain anything blundering around in ther dark. Ther plain out thar is alive with Apaches."

"How did you get through them?"

"Sharp work, lieutenant, nuthin' else. But I want ter tell ye of the queerest thing I ever saw in my life."

"What is that?"

"I'll tell ye!"

And the scout proceeded to tell of the curious car which had descended so destructively upon the body of Apaches in the darkness.

"By the great horn-spoon, I never saw the likes of it!" cried the scout. "I thought it was some locomotive that had run off the track and struck a course acrost the per-airy."

The lieutenant gave a great start.

"Oh, I think I understand it!" he cried.

"Ye do?"

"Yes; it very likely was that wonderful invention of Frank Reade, Jr.'s, the Electric Warrior."

"Frank Reade, Jr.!" exclaimed the surprised scout. "Who is he?"

"He is a young and famous inventor, whose home is in Readestown, a beautiful and thriving city founded by his father, who was an inventor before him."

"The deuce ye say!"

"He is the inventor of the Steam Man, the Electric Horse and many very wonderful things. I heard but yesterday that he was in this vicinity with his new invention, chasing the Apaches."

"Well, I never heerd tell on the likes of that afore!" exclaimed the astonished scout. "What sort of a machine is it, anyway?"

"I have heard that it is something of the shape of a car, as you say, but I have not yet seen it."

"By jingo! I'd like to see it in daylight. The way it tossed them red devils about was a caution!"

"Very likely. He carries a small cannon aboard, for which the government has offered him a fabulous sum for the secret of. It is some kind of an electric gun."

"Jingo! that beats me!"

"Then we will not start until daybreak for the ranch. I will take your advice."

"All right, leftenant. I reckon that Henry Dane an' his men kin keep the Apaches at bay fer thet length of time."

"God grant they may!" murmured the lieutenant; "if harm should come to the girl I love life is blank forever."

But the men were called out from their quarters, and preparations made for the earliest possible start.

Already, however, the gray light of dawn was breaking in the east.

Just as daylight was flooding the country a number of the picket relief came rushing into the yard of the fort.

Lieut. Clarke happened to be crossing the yard.

"Well," he cried, "what is the matter?"

"Something wrong down at Number 10," was the reply.

"Perhaps you can see it with a glass, lieutenant. It looks like a locomotive coming over the prairie."

The lieutenant sprang up on the rampart and leveled his glass at the prairie below.

He saw a curious object at the picket line. He gave a sharp cry.

"It is the Warrior!" he cried.

Then at that moment into the yard dashed an orderly on horseback.

"A message to you, lieutenant."

Clarke took a handsomely penned note from the officer's hand, and read:

"TO LIEUT. CLARKE:

"DEAR CLARKE—I thought I would drop in upon you this beautiful morning and talk over old times. I am giving the Apaches a little bit of fun just to test my new invention, the Warrior. Are you 'at home' to callers? Please reply.

"Yours faithfully, FRANK READE, JR."

"At home to callers?" laughed the lieutenant. "Well, I should say so!"

Then he penned a reply in quick order and sent it down to the picket.

A few moments later the most curious looking vehicle any there had ever seen came bowling into the yard of the fort.

It was in shape a half cylindrical shell of finely rolled steel placed upon a deck of the same, and which itself was trussed upon a fine set of springs and running gear.

The wheels were four in number and made with broad, grooved tires.

The front of the vehicle was open and gave a part view of the interior. A projection, or dasher, extended in front in the shape of a vessel's ram, and upon this was mounted a rakish looking steel gun.

There was a slide of steel screen, which could be used to cover the open front, if necessary.

Just upon the forward roof was an electric searchlight of tremendous power.

Windows were in the sides of the Warrior, three in number. At the rear was an iron door, and platform and steps by which to alight.

Everything about the machine was wonderfully light and symmetrical in construction, beautiful in contour, and grand in conception.

It was truly what it was intended for, a vehicle of war—a veritable modern war chariot.

Its motive power was electricity, and beneath could be seen the motor-cases and storage boxes.

The soldiers gathered in vast numbers to gaze upon this nineteenth century wonder.

Just visible in the forward part of the machine was a wheel for steering purposes, and with his hands upon the spokes was the most comical-looking darky one could imagine.

This was Pomp.

At his shoulders was a genuine type of the jolly Hibernian, a whole-souled, merry, joke-loving Irishman.

This was Barney O'Shea.

Both were faithful servants of the famous young inventor.

And now, down from the deck of the Warrior there stepped the young man whose name was such a synonym of fame in every part of the world.

He seemed a mere boy, yet a close look showed a well-knit frame, and a clear, handsome countenance, with a head indicating great depth of brain and wonderful thinking powers.

Frank Reade, Jr., advanced and gripped hands with the lieutenant.

"Well, Clarke," he said, warmly, "I'm glad to see you."

"The same, Frank!" replied the lieutenant. "You have a wonderful invention there!"

"Yes, it answers the purpose well."

"What has brought you into this region?"

"The Apaches! I wanted to test my new invention, and hearing of the late outbreak, I thought I would come down here for diversion and help quell the savages."

"Good! You are a philanthropist as well as inventor."

"Perhaps so. But what is new, Clarke?"

The young lieutenant gave a start.

Across his mind there came a thought of the besieged ranch of Henry Dane, far up on the plateau of Los Pesos.

"Frank!" he cried eagerly. "Do you want to give me some help?"

"What do you mean?"

"I will explain. Not one hundred miles from here there is the Los Pesos Plateau!"

"I have heard of it."

"A friend of mine has a ranch there called the Ranch Above the Clouds. He has been attacked by the Apaches and is bitterly hemmed in. Unless succor reaches him soon, he will suffer death. There are a dozen souls in that ranch fighting for their lives, and among them is Alma Dane, the girl to whom I am some day to be married. Now you understand my more than ordinary solicitude."

Frank Reade, Jr., seized his hand.

"Clarke," he said warmly, "I will be only too delighted to be of service to you. Shall I refuse to aid a friend?"

"No. I'll never judge you that way," said Clarke warmly. "I design to start at once, Frank."

"All right. I am ready at any time. But come aboard and let me show you the interior of the Warrior and introduce you to Barney and Pomp."

"I shall be delighted."

Frank led the way aboard the Warrior.

Pomp opened the door and Frank said:

"Clarke, allow me to introduce you to Pomp. He has a black skin, but a white heart."

The darky bowed to the floor.

"I'se done glad fo' to see you, sah," he said, with a broad grin. "You'se berry welcome ab'od de Warrior, sah!"

The lieutenant exchanged a few light remarks with the darky and then was introduced to Barney.

The Celt was warm in his greeting.

"Shure, sor, it's a moighty fine gintleman yez are, an' I'm flattered to meet yez. Shure, I hope yez didn't soil yer gloves shaking hands wid dat naygur there at de door."

"Hi dar, I'ish!" spouted Pomp, indignantly. "Clar to goodness if yo' ain't sassy. I done reckon my hands may be clean if dey am brack. I'se seen lots of dirty I'ishmens, I has!"

Everybody laughed at this.

Pomp and Barney were always nagging each other in a mock serious manner.

But in reality they were the warmest of friends, and to have parted them would have been like separating brothers.

Lieut. Clarke was amazed at the beauty of the finishings of the Warrior.

It was literally a palace on wheels.

Forward there was a partition, which divided the keyboard and wheel, as well as the electric discs from the rest of the interior.

A square compartment here was furnished with bunks, and a small table and seats with plush coverings.

There were cases of arms and other articles hung up by hooks.

In the rear of the vehicle was the cook room or galley. An electric stove was here placed, and this was properly Pomp's domain.

"It is wonderful!" cried Clarke; "truly it is a palace on wheels."

"You will think it a fortress on wheels later," said Frank, with a laugh.

"I dare say."

"I have a gun which the Apaches will learn to dread!"

"I am glad to hear that. Shall we not start at once, Frank?"

"You say that the inmates of the Ranch Above the Clouds are hard pressed?"

"Yes."

"Then let us start at once. The Warrior is ready when you are."

Lieut. Clarke sprang to the ground and ordered his horse.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE TRAIL.

Platoons of soldiers were drawn up in the fort yard.

Then the horses were brought from their quarters and the mounts made.

The bugle sounded, and the command, with Lieut. Clarke at its head, rode out of the fort.

The Warrior, with Frank Reade, Jr., and Barney and Pomp aboard, followed.

The scout, Lariat Luke, was the guide and led the troops. Lieut. Clarke rode just behind him.

In this manner the party swept across the plain.

Soon the fort faded from view upon the horizon.

Nothing was seen of the Apaches.

If they were near, they took good care to keep out of the way. They did not trouble the relief party.

"Well, Luke," said Clarke, as he rode by the trapper's side, "how soon ought we to come in sight of the Los Pesos Hills?"

"By nightfall, I reckon," replied the scout, confidently.

"You will see them due west from here."

"Can we reach the plateau to-night?"

"I reckon not."

"Why?"

"Wall, we won't make the hills afore dark. Then there's danger of gittin' ambushed by the Apaches!"

"Then we will have to camp to-night?"

"Yas; I reckon!"

Lariat Luke's prediction proved true.

The party came in sight of the Los Pesos Hills by nightfall.

Darkness shut in thick and fast and it was thought best to camp by the side of a small creek near.

This was done and everything made ship-shape for the night.

Thus far nothing had been seen of the Apaches.

Several trails had been crossed, but the Indians themselves had kept very discreetly out of sight.

Plans were now made for the morrow.

It was decided to take different paths to the plateau. At first, Lieut. Clarke was adverse to dividing the party.

But the scout Lariat Luke said:

"I see no other way, leftenant; thet machine kain't git up onto the plateau by the way we intend ter go."

So it was decided that while the soldiers took a short cut through a narrow pass in the hills, the Warrior should proceed by a more round-about route.

As they were now in the very heart of the Apache country, all precautions were taken to avoid a surprise.

A double line of guards were posted, and the soldiers rolled themselves up in their blankets with their muskets by their sides, ready for use.

Barney and Pomp, with their comical ways and genial expressions, became great favorites with the soldiers.

Barney was a fine player on the violin, and Pomp could vamp the banjo.

Both could sing in their inimitable way, and seated about the camp-fire that evening, they made things merry, indeed, until the hour for retiring.

Then, as the weary soldiers rolled themselves up in their blankets and relapsed into deep slumber, silence reigned over the prairie, broken only at times by the distant bark of the coyote.

Frank Reade, Jr., retired to rest, but Barney and Pomp could not sleep.

The comical geniuses sat out on the forward platform of the Warrior and whiled away the time in a friendly game of poker, under the glare of an electric globe.

Both were experts at the national game. While they played they chatted and argued in a friendly way.

"I jes' got yo' two bettah on dat, I'ish," said Pomp, throwing down a couple of coins.

"Begorra, I'll call yez, naygur. What have yez got, anyway?"

"A pair ob queens."

"Aces!"

Pomp flung down the cards in disgust.

"Yo' am dead suah gwine ter break me if I keep on!" he cried.

Barney's eyes twinkled and he slyly abstracted a card from his sleeve.

"Yez may have the winnin' av this hand!" he cried. "Shure, thry it again."

Pomp picked up the cards and saw that he had three jacks.

This was to him apparently a cinch, and he instantly decided to plunge.

Barney, the cute rascal, had been watching him, and instantly divined from the expression upon his face that he had a good hand.

The sly rascal quickly drew an ace from his sleeve and added it to two others which he had in his hand.

But sly as he was he was not shrewd enough to see that

he two aces were hearts, which was almost inconsistent for the pack of cards.

"Well, sor!" he said, brusquely; "how will yez play, naygur?"

The darky eagerly picked up his coins and laid them all down upon the table.

Barney affected a surprised stare and closed his cards.

"Bejabers, an' phwativer are yez doin', naygur?" he cried.

"I'se jes' gwine to bluff yo' dis time I'ish!" cried Pomp. "I'll bet mah pile agin yours on mah hand."

The Celt pretended to be dumbfounded.

"Yez don't mean that?"

"Yes, I does."

"Ye'll bet yer pile agin mine?"

"Dat am a fac'."

"Yez are bluffing."

"Dat's wha' I'm doing."

The wily Irishman fingered his cards a moment dubiously.

"Bejabers, av I thought ye wasn't bluffin' I'd bet ye."

"You had bettah not, chile."

Barney, with pretended reluctance, shoved his pile into the heap.

"Be Mither Murphy's pigs, I'll foind out whether yez air bluffin' or not. What have yez got, anyway?"

Pomp threw down his hand and made a grab for the pot.

"Huh! I'se jes' gwine an' done yo' up dis time, chile!" he cried.

"Howld on!" cried Barney. "Show your cards first. What have yez got?"

"I'se jes' got enuff fo' to do yo' up. Yo' kain't allus tell which way dis chile am bluffin', sah. I'se got three jacks, ah, an' king high."

"Tare an' 'ounds! Is that all ye've got?"

"I done reckon—but—wha' am yo' got, chile?"

Pomp's eyes literally bulged as Barney coolly laid down three aces.

"That's no koind av a hand to bet on, naygur," he said, complacently. "Begorra, I kin bluff as well as yez kin at any toime."

"Golly!" gasped Pomp. "Whoebber would hab fought dat? Three aces an'——"

Then the darky's face changed.

He picked up the two aces of hearts and said:

"How am dat? Am we playin' wif two packs ob cards, anyway?"

Barney's jaw fell.

He saw that he was caught.

Instantly he made a grab for the copper pennies.

But Pomp upset the table and made a dive for the tricky Celt.

"Huh! I jes' fix yo' fo' dat, I'ish!" he roared. "I done fink yo' don' play no moh such tricks on me as dat!"

His head caught Barney in the stomach, and the Celt went over the rail with a wild howl.

He rolled over on the green sward like a football.

The darky was after him, but he regained his feet and started to run.

Down through the sleeping rows of soldiers went the two skylarkers.

Out of the camp they ran, and straight for the picket line.

It was distant no more than fifty yards, but before Barney had covered half that distance, he was given a tremendous surprise.

Suddenly from the grass there sprang up half a dozen dusky, lithe forms.

They were savages, and the Celt saw it just too late to avoid a conflict with them.

In a moment he was the centre of a struggling mass.

Pomp, who was behind, with amazement saw the situation, and a yell of alarm and terror broke from his lips.

He also in the same moment saw by the light of the picket camp-fire beyond the dead form of the picket guard lying upon the ground.

In the darkness he had been surprised, tomahawked and scalped by the prowling Apaches.

The plain was alive with them.

Up from the deep grass they sprang in hundreds.

Barney and Pomp made a brave fight, but they were as children in the grasp of the red men.

They were quickly overpowered and carried captives beyond the picket line, and to a spot in a clump of trees where were the mustang horses of the Apaches.

Black Cloud had witnessed the invasion of his country by the white soldiers without having shown himself or made any resistance until this moment.

Now, however, he had made a strategic stroke characteristic of the red man.

Under cover of darkness he had invaded the lines of Lieut. Clarke's command, and seemed in a position to deal the invaders a terrible blow.

The yell of Pomp, however, had reached camp.

One of the camp guards had heard it and at once given the alarm.

In a moment the soldiers were roused from their slumber, and seizing their rifles sprang up.

Lieut. Clarke was the first on the scene, and his ringing commands went up on the night air.

"To arms!"

The scurrying soldiers hastily formed a line about the camp.

They were none too soon.

The dancing, lithe forms of the dusky foes were to be seen flitting through the gloom.

Then there came the crash of firearms. The battle had begun.

An Apache is perhaps the only type of American savage that will seek combat in an open field.

Black Cloud's warriors came on in a literal swarm.

They came from all quarters, and so rapidly that they seemed likely to completely overwhelm the soldiers.

Lieut. Clarke was an inspiration to his men.

He was everywhere giving resolute commands and cheering them on rapidly.

Volley after volley the troopers gave the attacking Indians.

But yet they seemed to hold their ground, and the battle waxed hotter.

Frank Reade, Jr., aroused from his slumbers, rushed out upon the forward platform of the Warrior.

He took in the situation at a glance.

The camp had been surprised by the Apaches, and it was by no means certain what the result would be.

The young inventor's first thought was of Barney and Pomp.

Where were they?

He was not a little astonished to be unable to find them on board the Warrior. What did it mean?

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE MOUNTAIN PASS.

What did it mean? What had become of the two faithful servitors? He had never before failed to find them at their post.

But there was little time to make search for them.

The conundrum must for the time be unanswered. Frank knew that quick action must be made.

At this moment Lieut. Clarke came up.

"Ah, Mr. Reade," he cried, "we are having a lively time of it."

"I see," replied Frank. "But can you tell me what has become of my men, Barney and Pomp?"

"I cannot."

"That is odd. I daresay, though, they are about the camp somewhere."

"Well, I wish they would show up; I want them. Ah, lieutenant?"

"Well?"

"Are they likely to best us? The Apaches, I mean?"

"They are, indeed. We cannot bring too great a force to bear!"

"Then give me a couple of men aboard the machine and I will mighty quick help out the situation."

"You shall have them."

Clarke sent a couple of his soldiers to Frank. They went aboard the Warrior, and Frank gave them some duties.

Then the young inventor went into the pilot-house forward, and pressing a key sent the Warrior forward slowly.

The Apaches were pressing the conflict rapidly.

They were so strong in number that the soldiers did not seem to have the power to hold them back.

Frank sent the Warrior forward until he had reached a commanding position.

Then he trained the electric gun to throw a bolt over into the ranks of the Apaches ahead.

"They will think the world is coming to an end when this strikes them!" he muttered.

Then he trained the electric gun and pressed a key.

In an instant there was a shock, a burst of flame, and into the Indian lines went the terrible bolt of death.

Its execution was something frightful.

There was an awful thunderous explosion which shook the earth.

The night air was filled with flying debris and the bodies of Indians. Fully a half score were wiped out in that moment.

The soldiers cheered and rushed again to the conflict.

Then another electric bolt was thrown into the Indian line.

Such havoc did it make that in consternation the savages broke and fled.

These two shots from the electric gun had won the battle.

Black Cloud's men did not stay to dispute the pass further.

As if pursued by a thousand demons, they fled into the darkness.

And the avenging soldiers went after them. But the wily Apaches had their horses in waiting, and mounting, made their escape.

Frank then sent the Warrior in a circle about the camp effectually accomplishing the rout of the savages.

In less than twenty minutes not a savage was to be found anywhere, and the battle was won.

Clarke came rushing up to the Warrior, and climbing on deck gripped Frank's hand.

"The fight is won!" he cried, "and it is due to your wonderful machine, Mr. Reade. Egad! but those were fearful bolts."

"I did not believe that the savages would stand long before them," said Frank.

"Nor did they."

"But I am worried about my men, Barney and Pomp. What can have happened to them?"

"It is very strange. They have not been seen since earlier in the evening, while singing their jolly songs."

Frank was completely mystified.

It was not like Barney and Pomp to leave the Warrior unguarded.

Yet it was possible that they had wandered out upon the prairie for some reason or other.

Certainly it was the only logical excuse, and in lieu of a better one Frank was obliged to accept it.

"They may turn up all right yet," said Clarke, hopefully.

"I trust they may," said Frank. "However, I see nothing we can do but to wait until morning."

"That is true," replied Clarke. "However, I will send scouts out to look for them!"

And this was done.

The Warrior took a spin out over the prairie, but the wily savages had made good their retreat in some manner probably to the hills.

Not the least trace of the missing men was found.

It was not known what their fate was, nor whether they were alive or not.

If in the power of the Apaches this was certainly equivalent to death.

Frank was beside himself.

He was exceedingly attached to his two faithful servitors. He would leave no stone unturned to find and rescue them.

But all quest that night was in vain.

Morning came finally, and once more the search was resumed.

An expert half-breed trailer was in the party, and he soon found a clew.

It was a trail leading out of the camp.

There was no doubt but that it was that of the two servitors. Their footprints were followed to the spot where they had the struggle with their captors.

And here they were lost sight of.

But the fact was apparently established that they had fallen into the clutches of the Apaches.

This was a most depressing realization for Frank Reade.

He was about inclined to give them up for lost.

As it was necessary for him to have assistance in operating the Warrior he was granted two of the privates from Lieut. Clarke's company.

Then the original plans of the party were for a time suspended.

Frank positively refused to go to the assistance of the besieged ranch while his own men were in trouble.

"It is my duty to look after Barney and Pomp first," he said, "then I will lend my best efforts to the succor of the others."

"Well," said Lieut. Clarke, "I can well understand your motives, Mr. Reade, and I do not blame you. On the other hand, I am going to give you all the assistance in my power!"

"Thank you!" replied Frank. "I feel it my duty to first rescue Barney and Pomp."

"In that you are right."

"If I have to scour this country and exterminate every Indian in it I shall rescue my men."

"Good! It would be a blessing to exterminate every Apache in Arizona. I am with you heart, body and soul."

A short while later the party was on the move.

The trail of the Apaches was followed with little difficulty.

But after a time it entered the hills and here it was lost.

The ground was loose and shaky, so that the foot-prints could not be described.

The trailers finally came to a halt, and announced that they were defeated.

It was then decided to separate and scour the hills, making a half circle and meeting at a point further in the interior.

Frank Reade, Jr., with the Warrior, was obliged to stick to the pass, for the wheels of the vehicle could not travel over the rough ledges.

The mounted soldiers could pick their way along through the rocky region without difficulty.

So the Warrior went on alone through the pass, and the cavalry went over the hills.

We will follow the Warrior for a brief while.

The floor of the pass was hard and solid, and the Warrior found no trouble in making its way through.

The scenery at this point was something terrific and grand.

Upon either side the walls of the pass rose to a height of fully a thousand feet.

Dark and frowning they were, resembling the entrance to a terrestrial Hades.

The Warrior rolled along upon the stone floor of the pass for several miles.

Then gradually the country beyond began to unfold itself.

But before the end of the canyon was reached, however, a thrilling thing hapened.

Suddenly one of the two cavalrymen who were aboard the Warrior with Frank, and whose name was Myers, gave a cry of alarm.

"Look out!" he yelled; "there's trouble ahead."

The other soldier, whose name was Bent, was instantly by his side.

"Where?" he cried.

But Frank, who was at the wheel, had already seen the danger.

Upon a section of the canyon wall he saw a number of painted Apaches.

They were rolling a big boulder to the edge of the cliff for the purpose of dropping it upon the Warrior.

Should that stone chance to drop full weight upon the machine, it might safely be said that little would be left of it or its occupants.

Frank saw this in a flash of time and was quick to act.

He pressed the lever and brought the Warrior to an instant stop.

"By Jove!" cried Myers, "that was a close pull, eh?"

"You're right," agreed Bent. "What will we do, Mr. Reade?"

This was indeed a question not easily answered.

There lay the deadly peril right before them. It was not possible for the Warrior to safely pass this spot.

The Apaches plainly held the pass with the stone poised in air. Should the Warrior attempt to pass, the result would be terrible.

What was to be done?

It was a question which for a moment bothered Frank not a little.

It was necessary to proceed on up the pass. But to attempt to run that gantlet of death would be fatal.

Frank, however, was not long in a state of doubt.

"I will fix the rascals!" he exclaimed.

He went forward and trained the electric gun to bear upon that angle of the canyon wall.

The Apaches had secreted themselves behind the rocks and were firing at the Warrior.

The bullets rattled harmlessly upon the metal shell of the Warrior. Bent and Myers were returning the fire in a desultory way.

Frank drew back the lever of the electric gun and connected it with the battery. Then he pressed the key.

There was a quick recoil, a flash of light and the projectile struck the boulders above.

The effect was terrific.

The mighty boulder was shattered into a thousand pieces. They were scattered everywhere and the fleeing Apaches could be seen far up on the canyon wall.

Frank once more trained the gun on the canyon wall and fired a second shot.

The result of this was startling.

Down over the wall came a tremendous volume of water.

CHAPTER V.

BLACK CLOUD'S PROPOSAL.

The sensations of Barney and Pomp, captives in the power of the Apaches, were not of the pleasantest.

"Och hone, but it's an unlucky day fer us!" wailed Barney. "Shure, I'm thinkin' it will be the ind av us fer sure."

"Golly! I done fink de same fing mahself, I'ish."

"Begorra, it's too bad."

"An' all jes' on account ob yo' foolin' wif dis chile."

"Bejabbers, don't yez tell me that. It wor yesilf chasin' me in sich a way through the camp."

"Yo' had no bizness fo' to play yo' foolish tricks on me."

"On me wurrud, I'll do worse to yez the next toime."

"No, yo' won't, chile, fo' yo' an' dis chile will nebber lib fo' to try dat fing any more."

Pomp's face was long drawn and his spirits depressed. Indeed, Barney was in the same state.

Now could be heard the distant sounds of the battle.

"Hear dat!" cried Pomp; "p'raps de sogers whip de Injuns an' sabe us yit."

"Niver yez belave that!" cried Barney. "It's not our luck."

It seemed certainly as if a hot fight was in progress.

Suddenly there was a distant thunderous roar.

"It's the electric gun!" cried Barney. "Shure, they'll niver want to foight agin that long!"

Their Indian captors now seemed to be much excited.

Suddenly a brave came bounding into a clump of trees.

A few muttered commands, and then the two prisoners were placed upon the backs of a couple of mustangs.

In the midst of a score of the Apaches they were galloped away over the plain.

On and on they sped, until the Los Pesos Hills loomed up near at hand.

Soon they were in a deep pass, and finally after hours of tortuous windings they came out upon a broad plateau far up among the mountains.

Day was breaking in the east. The sunlight was glinting

thwart the morning sky when the party suddenly entered the Apache village.

This consisted of a large collection of skin tepees and adobe huts.

In the mountain wall back of the plateau there were a large number of cliff houses.

In these former abodes of the cliff dwellers the Apaches had also made residences.

There were long rope ladders which could be pulled up in case of an attack. It was apparently for this purpose of a citadel of last defence that the Apaches had utilized the cliff houses.

Barney and Pomp gazed upon the scene with deepest interest.

The Apache women and children, with a colony of yelping dogs, came rushing out to meet them.

The excitement in the Apache village was intense when it was known that two prisoners had arrived.

The two captives were led to the centre of the village, where a council was held.

And while the savages were engaged in their excited discussion, Barney and Pomp were considering their situation and the possibilities of an escape.

These did not look large by any manner of means.

They could see that the spot was one designed by nature for an impregnable retreat.

It was shut in on three sides by perpendicular cliff walls.

The plateau was several miles in area and as smooth as a floor. The entrance was by means of the pass and was a narrow one.

In such a place as this a handful of men could long hold foe at bay.

In fact, there seemed no easy or possible way for the enemy to drive them out except at great loss.

Retreating to their cliff houses, which seemed perfectly inaccessible, the Apaches could remain safely an indefinite length of time.

The council held by the Apaches was a long and stormy one.

Suddenly a decision seemed to have been reached.

Several powerful braves rushed forward and threw Barney and Pomp upon their backs.

Then lariats were secured about their limbs and two live ponies were brought out.

To the saddle the end of the lariat was attached. Barney saw the intent at once, and a chill struck him.

It was beyond doubt the purpose of the wretches to drag their victims to death at the heels of the wild ponies.

The excitement was intense.

The Apache women swarmed about the two unlucky prisoners.

The Indian woman seems to be devoid of that sympathy possessed by her white sister. They are in all respects more merciless than the braves.

They jeered and spat upon the two captives, and inflicted all manner of indignities upon them.

"Begorra, it's the ind av us, Pomp!" cried Barney, dejectedly.

"Yo' is jes' right, F'ish," agreed the darky, dismally. "Whatebber shall we do?"

"Bejabers, we'll say our prayers, fer we've got to die!"

"Golly! What will Marse Frank say when he hears ob dis?"

"Be me sowl, I hope he will come up here wid his dynamite gun an' blow the spalpeens all to pieces!"

"Huh! dat won' do us no good."

"Bejabers, it'll be revinge!"

"But it won' sabe us, chile."

"Don't say that it does, naygur. It is some sathisfaction to know, howiver, that the divils got a dose themselves for it."

"Hum! don' beliebe yo' nor I will know much 'bout dat!"

Barney did not have time to pursue the argument further.

The ponies were led forward and two hideous savages stood with whips ready to start the death scene.

But before the word to start could be given there was a sudden commotion in the throng.

A loud and guttural but commanding voice was heard.

The throng parted and through it strode a tall, powerful-framed savage with the head-dress of a chief.

He stood for a moment haughtily gazing at the prisoners.

Not one was there in the nation to dispute his word.

He was Black Cloud, the famous Apache, for whose head there was a price, and whose record for cruel outrages and daring deeds was without parallel.

Black Cloud did not speak for several moments.

Then he made a motion to a couple of his braves, who advanced and almost instantly cut the lariats.

The ponies cantered away and the crowd fell back.

The death scene was not enacted. For the nonce the prisoners' lives were spared.

Then Black Cloud extended his hand, to the astonishment of Barney and Pomp, and said:

"White men, take the hand of Black Cloud. He will treat with you, but you are the first, white or black, that he has ever said so much to."

Barney took the noted chief's hand, saying:

"Shure, sor, it's mighty glad I am to make yer acquaintance. Faith, an' ye're the foinest Indian gentleman I've seen fer miny a day. May ye have luck."

But the famous chief did not affect to notice Barney's adroit blarney.

Not a muscle of his stern and rigid face relaxed. He said, haughtily:

"There is no love in the heart of the Apache for the white man. He hates him as he does the venomous rattler. But the white man has a wagon with a deadly gun which sends out thunder and lightning. Black Cloud will treat with his white brethren."

Every word uttered by the chief was lofty, high-flown and direct. Barney was astute enough to see the point.

"Arrah, an' it's right glad we'll be to treat wid yez!" he declared. "Shure, an' av I had me canteen wid me now I'd trate yez in genuine style."

"The white man shall be spared," said Black Cloud, loftily.

"An' phwat about me black brudder?" asked Barney, coolly.

"He shall live."

"Shure, an' we're much obliged to ye, chief," said Barney, with extravagant politeness. "We'll give yez a good name to the big men at Washington, an'——"

But the chief waved his hand impatiently.

"In return for your lives my brethren must give me the thunder wagon and the gun that speaks with lightning in its mouth."

This dumfounded both Barney and Pomp.

Their momentary hopes were dispelled like mist before the sun.

The chief's manner was very decided, and seeing the hopeless expression upon the faces of the two, he continued with emphasis:

"If my brethren refuse to grant these terms, then they shall die. Black Cloud has spoken."

Barney's quick wit saved the day.

"Shure, yez don't mean that, chief?" he said, deprecatingly.

"Black Cloud has spoken," said the chief, haughtily.

"Shure, an' that's not a fair trade!" declared Barney, impetuously. "Won't a ride in the wagon do yez?"

The chief waved his arm impatiently.

Barney's wit did not desert him.

"Faith, an' are those the best terms ye'll be afther givin' me?" he asked.

The chief nodded his head.

"Then I'll give yez an answer to-morrow. Will that do yez?"

"The white man speaks wisely," said the chief. "To-morrow he shall speak to me."

Then he turned and gave a guttural order to two of the warriors.

Black Cloud strode haughtily away.

The two braves advanced and led Barney and Pomp away across the plateau.

At the foot of the cliffs they paused.

A long rope ladder was the means of ascent fifty feet to one of the cliff dwellings above.

Up this the two captives were compelled to climb.

Arrived at the excavation in the cliff above, one of their captors ascended to an aperture above and drew the ladder up after him.

Barney and Pomp were left to themselves in the cliff dwelling fifty feet above the ground and with no means of descent.

Their bonds had been cut, however, and they had the free use of their limbs.

"Begorra, here we are!" cried the Celt, excitedly. "Shure, an' it's a foin prospect up here; but, naygur, how would we iver git down, I'd loike to know."

"Massy sakes!" said Pomp, in disgust. "An' it's jes' a mighty po' chance fer we uns. I done fink our goose am cooked!"

"Howld on a bit," said Barney, with a shrug of his sturdy shoulders. "I'll fool that blackguard yit, or me name ain't Barney O'Shea. He wants the thunder wagon, eh? Well, now, if I only knew where to foind Mither Frank we'd moighty quick fix up a trap for him, do you see?"

"Kain't say that I kin, I'ish," said Pomp, doubtfully. "P'raps yo' kin jes' explain de matter to me a lily bit."

CHAPTER VI.

A TIGHT RACE.

The astonishment of Frank Reade, Jr., at sight of the immense volume of water coming down over the canyon wall was quickly changed to alarm.

The electric bomb had struck and shattered the wall which held back the mountain lake, and this was now emptying itself bodily into the canyon.

Frank took in the situation at a glance.

Even Bent and Myers saw this, and cried in alarm:

"Great heavens! We are lost!"

"Never!" cried Frank, as he sprang to the wheel.

Quick as a flash he turned the Warrior about and ther put on the full force of the dynamos.

The water had already overtaken the wagon and was up to the hubs.

But the Warrior shot forward with such speed that the flood was outstripped, and presently the clear, hard floor of the canyon was struck.

Down the canyon at awful speed fled the Warrior.

But the flood was every moment gaining in volume and speed also.

The first roar of the falling water had now grown to a boom of sullen thunder.

The prairie was a mile away.

If the Warrior could reach it there was a chance, for the flood would quickly spread itself upon the vast expanse.

On thundered the Warrior like a veritable avalanche.

Frank Reade, Jr., was at the wheel.

Myers and Bent clung to the rail and held their breaths for fear that the machine would strike some one of the various obstructions in the canyon.

But Frank Reade, Jr.'s steady hand held the Warrior true to its course.

Immense boulders were dodged and sharp corners were turned, it is true, upon two wheels, but safely.

And still on behind came the hungry, devouring waters.

But still the Warrior held its own.

Half the distance had been covered. All was awful suspense.

Would the prairie never come in sight? Would the Warrior be able to outrun the flood?

If not, all was lost.

Should the water overtake the Warrior, all on board would be drowned like rats in a trap.

It was by no means a cheerful reflection. The two soldiers, Bent and Myers, were plucky fellows, but they admitted a feeling of absolute terror.

Half the distance had been covered.

The flood was thundering on behind, but yet did not seem to be gaining.

Frank felt sure of making the prairie safely.

But just at that moment, above the thunder of the flood, there rose a wild cry from the two soldiers.

The Warrior was just making a turn in the canyon, when there burst into view a squad of mounted Apaches.

There were fully a score in the party. They were evidently surprised, but had presence of mind enough to wheel their horses.

Down the canyon they went.

But the Warrior, thundering on in their rear, overtook them.

Frank would ordinarily have been loath to run into them.

But there was plainly no alternative. The Warrior bore down upon the fleeing horses like a thunderbolt.

Down they went under the iron wheels of the Warrior.

Savages and horses were piled up in a crushed heap. The Warrior went through them like a knife through cheese.

It was a question of life or death, and Frank felt warranted in the slaughter.

Many of the savages, forced to the wall, were found uninjured.

But the flood overtook these a moment later, and swept them into eternity. The Warrior, however, still kept in advance of the raging waters.

It reached the prairie first, and ran several miles at top speed over the broad surface of the plain.

The waters spread themselves everywhere, and made of the plain a vast shallow lake.

But the ground quickly took the water in and the danger was past.

"By Jupiter!" cried Bent; "we got out of that scrape lucky!"

"You're right, comrade!" agreed Myers; "but it was a hard fate for those poor devils of Indians, eh?"

"You're right."

"Will we return to the pass, Mr. Reade?" Myers asked.

"Yes," replied Frank. "I think now that we shall have no further trouble in entering the hills."

"I dunno," said Bent. "Maybe the canyon walls will collapse next time."

"We will trust not," said the young inventor, with a laugh.

So the Warrior was sent back to the hills. Entering the pass once more it made its way rapidly to the scene of the catastrophe just recorded.

None of the Apaches were in sight.

If they were near they did not show themselves. For this Frank was not sorry.

Yet the young inventor knew better than to for a moment relax vigilance.

He kept a sharp lookout as the Warrior crept up the sinuous pass.

After leaving the outlet of the flood behind, the party came to a branch in the canyon.

It was hard to decide which one to take, but Frank finally decided to go to the right.

For a mile further they kept on. Nothing was seen of the Apaches.

But now the scene began to change.

The Warrior came out in full view of vast uplands of green. This was excellent grazing for sheep, and instinctively Frank thought of the Ranch Above the Clouds.

"I'll wager that I am coming to it!" he muttered; "that would indeed be a joke."

A few moments later Frank became satisfied that it was a positive fact.

Suddenly a man stepped out from behind a shadow of rock. In full view he stood, a fine specimen of manhood, but with disheveled hair and bloody person.

He held up his arms and made excited gestures.

Of course Frank stopped the Warrior. The fellow advanced, and Frank, stepping out upon the platform, cried:

"Well, my man, what is the matter with you?"

"Help!" cried the fellow, earnestly. "We want help. We have been attacked by Apaches, and our ranch is besieged!"

"Who are you?"

"I am Roger Walden, in the employ of Henry Dane, of the Ranch Above the Clouds. Will you give us help?"

"Of course I will," cried Frank Reade, Jr., positively; "that's what I'm in this region for."

"Heaven be praised! What sort of a wagon have you got there, and how do you make it go?"

"This is the Warrior, and electricity is the motive power."

"Thunder! it is a great thing, ain't it? I never see the likes. I should think you would never need to fear the Apaches."

"Nor do we," replied Frank. "But come aboard and tell us your story."

The fellow was only too glad to obey.

Once aboard Frank had a repast spread for him. Then he told his story.

"Our ranch is hard pressed," he said. "Only twelve brave men are behind the stockade. Thus far they have held the whole three thousand Apaches at bay. But the ammunition is giving out, and you can understand what the consequences will be."

"I can," replied Frank; "but I trust that they will succeed in holding out a little while longer. There is succor coming. Several hundred cavalrymen from Fort High Rock are in these hills."

"Good," cried Walden, rapturously; "then the ranch will be saved. Oh, if only Black Cloud's gang could be exterminated this country would receive great benefit."

"We will see what we can do toward it," said Frank, coolly. "Is the ranch near here?"

"Yes."

"I will soon be there to give them aid."

"But will you not come now?" asked Walden, anxiously.

"But how can I? My two faithful servants, Barney and Pomp, are in the clutches of the red foe. I must find and rescue them first."

"Oh, but it will be too late if you do not go to the ranch now!"

"But are they not holding their own?"

"They have been. But another attack by Black Cloud will, I fear, end the contest."

Frank hesitated.

"What shall I do?" he said, perplexedly. "I want to help your people, but, on the other hand, there are my own to look out for."

"Yet, if you will raise the siege at the ranch, all the inmates will turn out and help you. Besides, the ranch is not two miles distant."

"Indeed!" said Frank, with a start. "Is that all?"

"Yes."

The young inventor looked at the matter in a practical light. For the nonce he had no track of Barney and Pomp nor no clew to guide him.

The ranch was not two miles distant. It would not take long for the electric gun to disperse the Indians.

On the other hand, if he refused and continued his search for Barney and Pomp, the ranch might fall and all in it be murdered in cold blood.

It involved a good deal of close, careful thought.

Finally Frank made up his mind.

"Get aboard," he said to Walden. "I'll go to the ranch."

The frontiersman obeyed. It was the first time that he had seen the interior of the Warrior, and he was amazed.

"Upon my word!" he muttered. "You have a wonderful invention, Mr. Reade."

"I am pleased to think so," said Frank, modestly.

As the Warrior went on over the tree-clad slopes, the distant sound of firing was heard.

A shade of anxiety was upon Walden's face, rugged as was.

"Black Cloud has attacked the ranch again!" he declared. "I fear the worst. He has said that before another night it should be in his power."

"So Black Cloud is the notorious leader of the Apaches?"

"Well, yes; but I believe that this especial attack is headed by Long Lance, who is really a white renegade named Benton Vance."

"Indeed!"

"You see Vance has fallen in love with pretty Alice Dane. His hope is to capture the ranch and seize her as prey."

"The scoundrel!" cried Frank. "We will endeavor to spoil his game."

The Warrior went on rapidly now.

Suddenly it came to a level plain far up in the gr

hills. And here the Ranch Above the Clouds came into view.

It was a large structure, surrounded by a high stockade.

It was an awful sight which rewarded the gaze of all aboard the Warrior. The stockade was seen to be battered down; there were hundreds of Indians swarming about, and the ranch itself was in flames.

"My God!" cried Roger Walden, in awful horror, "we are too late. The ranch has fallen into the hands of the Apaches!"

It was a horrible truth.

CHAPTER VII.

A DARING ESCAPE.

We left Barney and Pomp in the cliff dwelling, prisoners of Black Cloud, the Apache chief.

They were discussing the probability of working a shrewd scheme to outwit the Apache chief and at the same time to secure their own liberty.

"P'raps yo' kin jes' explain de matter to me a lily bit," said Pomp, who had been listening to Barney's declaration.

"Bejabers, an' I kin that," declared the Celt. "All we wud have ter do would be ter git the omadhoun on board the Warrior for a roide, an' thin electrify him, bejabers. Put him onto one av ther dynamos."

Pomp nodded his head.

"Dat done look bery well on paper, chile," he declared, "but it ain't so easy fo' to execute, I reckon."

"On me sowl, I belave I'll thry it, jist the same!" declared Barney.

And here the subject dropped.

The two captives proceeded to look through their prison cell.

They found that this consisted of a large square but low-roofed chamber, hewn out of the soft rock.

The narrow doer and one window alone admitted light and air.

Barney proceeded to examine the walls closely.

There were long rows of these cliff houses along the face of the cliff.

They were divided only by these walls of stone. The shrewd brain of the Celt studied the situation in every phase.

But if he arrived at any conclusion, he said nothing.

The two captives sat in the doorway of their novel prison cell and watched the proceedings in the town below.

Thus the day faded.

As night once more began to settle down, water and some pieces of venison were lowered to them from above.

Food was most wholesome, and they partook of it eagerly.

"Begorra, me appetite niver fails me!" declared Barney. "Even at me mother-in-law's wake, shure, I ate the biggest dinner av any wan in the party."

Darkness was now shutting down very rapidly.

Objects below were but dimly visible. The lights of the Indian town only could be seen.

Barney crawled to the door of the cliff dwelling and looked out.

Then he turned back to Pomp and whispered:

"Whist! Be aisy! I've a foine idea!"

"Yo' hab, chile?" exclaimed Pomp. "Fo' goodness sake, what am it?"

"Begorra, there's only a thin wall atwixt us an' the nixt house. Shure, the varmint overlooked me knife whin they disarmed me. I have it, and bejabers, I'm goin' to cut me way through that wall."

"Huh!" ejaculated Pomp, "but it am all solid stone."

"Don't yez believe that. It's as soft as cheese, an' if I don't cut me way into the nixt house in twenty minutes, thin I'll trate."

Pomp was astonished.

"Hol' on, chile!" he cried; "how yo' know but de nex' house am ockerpied?"

"Divil a bit. I had me eye on it all the afthernoon. I'll risk it."

"But how am yo' gwine to be any bettah off? It am jes' as high up as dis house."

"Be me sowl! I know that as well as ye! But come here!"

Barney drew Pomp to the door.

"Do yez not see that foine rope ladder hanging from the dure?" he asked. "Shure, phwat more do yez want?"

"Golly sakes! It am a fac'!" gasped Pomp. "We am de people!"

"Yez kin bet on dat. Now for to git to worruk."

Without further preliminaries Barney began work with his knife upon the soft limestone.

He worked away vigorously.

It yielded readily to his efforts, and very soon he had cut a small hole through the limestone.

This it was necessary to enlarge.

But the limestone cut easily, and in course of time, with their combined efforts, the two captives had a sufficiently large aperture for them to crawl through.

They did so, and stood in the next cliff dwelling. One step toward liberty had been taken.

Barney crept to the edge of the cliff and peered over.

All was darkness just below.

But at a point beyond the lights of the Indian town showed and the barking of dogs could be heard.

It was a thrilling moment.

"Bejabers!" exclaimed Barney, in a sibilant voice, "I'm afther thinkin' that we kin make good our escape yit."

"I jes' reckon you'se right, I'ish!" agreed Pomp; "but we ain't out ob de woods yit, yo' know."

"Yez may be roight, naygur. But will yez slip down the rope forst, or shall I?"

"I jes' 'specs I might as well go mahself," said Pomp.

So over the edge he slid.

Down to the ground he went rapidly. Barney quickly followed.

Both stood at the foot of the cliff.

They remained silent and motionless for some moments to make sure that the coast was clear.

It was well that they did this, for suddenly Barney clutched Pomp's arm and whispered:

"Sh! Bejabers, I see wan av the omadhouns!"

"Does yo'?" queried Pomp, breathlessly. "Whar'bouts am he?"

"Jist yender by thet fir tree. Aisy now, an' we'll give him the slip."

It was true that one of the Apaches, with a blanket wrapped about him, sat motionless and still upon a log just under the tree.

He was not twenty yards distant.

It was curious that he had not seen the two escaping prisoners, for they had made some noise in the descent.

Had Barney and Pomp known the truth they would have ceased to feel alarmed.

The savage was really fast asleep.

"Whist, now!" whispered Barney; "This way, naygur! Creep along aisyl"

But their trouble was for naught.

The savage did not awaken, and they made their way along the base of the cliff in the deep shadows.

Of course there was no little risk in this, for there was the chance that some of the savages might stumble upon them at any moment.

But the two prisoners were willing to take any chances for escape.

So they kept on cautiously, Barney leading the way.

Neither had a weapon of any kind. In case of an attack they would have been compelled to depend upon their legs.

But very fortunately none of the savages came into their path.

However, now and then a thrilling peril confronted them.

In order to get out of the Apache camp it was positively necessary for them to pass directly through the village.

Of course this was a dangerous proceeding. Apparently the village was in slumber, but yet some of the Apaches might be abroad.

What could be done, however, but to make the best of it? So they crept along cautiously until the lodges of the village were close at hand.

Then they paused for consultation.

"Golly, I done fink we's gwine to git ourselves in a bad scrape now," said Pomp. "Howebber is we gwine to git froo dis place?"

"Aisy, me lad," said Barney, coolly. "Jist howld your horses and I'll purty quick show ye a thrick or two. Do yez see that tint yender?"

Barney referred to a lodge near, the flap of which was pulled back.

A small fire burned at the entrance and illumined the interior.

From their position the two prisoners could see four sleeping Indians rolled up in their blankets.

Their weapons lay by the side of each. It was these that Barney had cast a longing look at.

"I see, I'ish," replied Pomp. "But what ob dat?"

"Wait a bit, an' I'll show yez."

"Wha' yo' gwine, I'ish?"

"Jist watch a bit an' ye'll see."

Pomp did watch and saw the daring Celt creep cautiously to the door of the lodge.

The Indian sleeps like a cat, and Barney knew the risk he was incurring, but he did not hesitate.

Into the lodge he crept and cautiously picked up a couple of the rifles and cartridge pouches.

He reached the door of the lodge, when a thrilling thing happened.

One of the savages bounded to his feet with an ear-splitting shriek.

He made a dash at Barney, but the Celt met him with a stinging blow on the cranium which stretched him out senseless.

Quick as a flash Barney sprang into the gloom.

He thrust one of the rifles and cartridge pouches into Pomp's hands, saying:

"Begorra, we kin make a foight, anwway."

"Yes; but jes' yo' see wha' yo' hab done, I'ish!" said Pomp, angrily.

"Well, what av it, naygur?"

"Golly! yo' hab jes' roused de hull camp ob Injuns an' we's done spiled our chances for escape."

"Divil a bit!" cried Barney, excitedly. "Luk for yersilf, naygur. Come wid me."

Barney's move had been rather a rash one.

But the hot-headed Irishman had no intention of admitting this. Pomp was much vexed at the result.

The whole Apache camp was now aroused. They came rushing from their lodges in great numbers.

The position of the two prisoners was now a very shaky one. Something had to be done, and that at once.

Barney, however, was equal to the occasion.

"This way, naygur," he cried. "Jist yez foller me."

"But whar am yo' gwine?" asked Pomp, dubiously. His faith in Barney's sagacity was somewhat shaken.

"Jist yez come along and ask no questions."

"Huh! I done fink yo' done know wha' yo' am about."

"Begorra, if I don't, thin yez may make shure that ye don't."

With which logical assertion Barney dashed away through the underbrush. Pomp, of course, followed.

The Celt led the way through the darkest part of the outskirts of the village.

Several times they narrowly avoided collision with some of the aroused and excited Apaches.

Had they really collided with the red foe, the result would have been serious indeed.

But each time Barney succeeded in dodging them.

"Whurroo!" he cried. "Shure, we'll make it yit. They'll niver catch us."

"Done yo' be too sure ob dat!" said Pomp.

But Barney only laughed, and kept on with accelerated speed.

They had now nearly reached the lower end of the village and the mouth of the pass.

Barney was confident of escape. He ran at full speed. Now the mouth of the pass was at hand.

But just as escape seemed a veritable fact, the Irishman saw lights flashing in the darkness ahead.

And their flash for an instant blinded him so that he tripped and fell in a heap.

The object he tripped over was an animate one, too, for just as he scrambled up he became enveloped in the arms of an Apache brave.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE APACHE VILLAGE.

The scene which Frank Reade, Jr., and his party beheld was a terrible one as they came in view of the Ranch Above the Clouds.

The ranch had certainly fallen into the hands of the Apaches, and was in a fair way to destruction.

The yelling horde of fiends were holding high carnival about the surrounding ruins.

Not a sign of white inmates was to be seen, and it was only fair to presume that they had been slaughtered.

The plucky ranchmen had held out probably just as long as they were able to, and had been finally obliged to succumb.

The sensations of Walden were not to be easily described.

Pallid as a ghost and trembling, he cried:

"My God! Too late—too late!"

"The Apaches have got in their work," said Myers, with a shiver.

"There is only one way to fix 'em, and that is to blow 'em up!" cried Bent.

"Right," said Frank Reade, Jr., rigidly, "and here goes for revenge."

The young inventor quickly trained the electric gun.

The savages had just caught sight of the Warrior.

It had a curious effect upon them.

Instead of retreating, they cast themselves in a body upon the ground. Frank could not help a smile.

Evidently the wretches fancied they could evade the electric bolt in this way. They were well aware that the lightning stroke could overtake them should they attempt flight.

The next moment there came a flash and a mighty explosion.

A pile of earth several feet in height was raised, and debris was scattered in all directions.

The flying brands filled the air, and through the mighty cloud of smoke and dust the terrified Apaches could be seen in flight.

Frank motioned Myers to stay by the gun, and he went to the wheel.

The Warrior was sent ahead at a lively pace. Not until they were a few feet from the smouldering ruins of the ranch did Frank stop the Warrior.

Then the machine was brought to a stop and Frank alighted.

The scene, as now presented, was a terrible one.

There was every indication that the defenders of the ranch had made a bold and desperate stand.

Dead bodies of savages were everywhere, and in the ashes could be seen the half-consumed remains of the defenders.

For a moment the Warrior's party stood gazing at the scene in silence.

Roger Walden was perhaps the most affected.

"My God;" he groaned. "This is an awful thing. Every one of them wiped out in this brief period of time!"

"Perhaps all have not suffered death," said Frank, hopefully. "There is a chance that some of them may have been carried away."

"No," said Walden, positively, "I do not believe that."

"Why?"

"Henry Dane was not of the kind to surrender. He would die first."

"Goodness!" exclaimed Myers. "I can see the head of one of them peeping over that bush yonder. I'll give him a shot."

And Myers would have done so, but at that moment what came near proving a tragic incident happened.

There was a crash of guns, and bullets came flying about.

It was little short of a miracle that some one was not hurt.

As it was, however, luckily the bullets flew wide.

Myers gave a yell.

"Look out! The devils are behind those bushes!" he cried. "Look out for yourself!"

"Get aboard the Warrior!" cried Frank, in a commanding voice. "We will soon fix the rascals."

The command was quickly obeyed.

All scrambled aboard the Warrior. They were none too soon, for another volley followed the first.

But Frank quickly threw back the lever of the electric gun.

A ball was thrown into the bushes with terrible effect. Then the Warrior proceeded to take a run about the clearing.

This was most effectual.

Nothing more was seen or heard of the savages from that time. The lesson had been to them a most terrible one.

Beaten off, the Apaches preserved a respectful distance and silence.

Roger Walden could not recover from the shock of seeing the ranch in ashes.

"Poor Dane!" he exclaimed. "He and his beautiful daughter are no doubt ashes in that smouldering heap."

"Do not say that," said Frank Reade, Jr.; "their lives may have been spared."

"I wish that I knew that for a fact."

"The savages would not be likely to take the life of the young girl."

"Ah! but if she has fallen into their hands her fate is worse than death."

Frank knew that this was true.

But he said:

"It will do no harm to pursue these savages. If she is indeed in their power it may be that we can rescue her."

"Yours are words of hope," said Walden, earnestly. "I trust they may be verified."

"There is no doubt of it," said Frank. "I tell you they would not kill her, but take her away as a captive."

"But suppose she did not fall into their hands, but was a victim to the flames?"

"That is possible; but we will not believe it until we are obliged to."

"Your idea is a good one," said Walden, hopefully. "I will not yet despair."

So the Warrior was sent upon the trail of the savages.

This led into a deep gulch, where it was slow work for the machine to pick its way along.

But after a time the party came out of this and entered a small valley, which seemed to lie deep down in the heart of the hills.

"Clear Water Valley!" said Walden; "there is a village of Black Cloud's people here. They are called the north branch of the main tribe."

"Ah," said Frank, curiously; "is it a large encampment?"

"We shall presently see."

"Then we are not far from it at this present moment."

"Do you see yonder small butte?"

"Yes."

"Their village is behind that. Many a time I have chased the wretches almost to their doors after having lost a few cattle by their thieving."

Walden had hardly ceased speaking when Myers shouted:

"Hurrah! Look down yonder, Mr. Reade. What would you call that, I'd like to know, but an Indian?"

Myers pointed to a distant object in the verge of a clump of trees.

At once all eyes were turned in that direction, and it was seen that the object in question was really a savage.

A stalwart Apache he was, mounted upon a mustang.

He sat upon his horse regarding the electric invention with amazement.

"It is an Apache," declared Frank. "A big fellow, too."

"Yes; and presently you will see more of them," declared Walden.

The Warrior bore down for the solitary savage, but as if not anxious for a close acquaintance he vanished in the timber.

But now the butte which stood in the center of the valley was rounded, and a view of the Indian village was had.

There were several hundred lodges of bark and skin in the place.

But to the surprise of all on board the Warrior there was no sign of Indian braves about the vicinity.

The Apache village had a lonely and deserted air.

It required but a moment for Walden to grasp the situation.

"Hurrah!" he cried, "there is nobody at home. The Apache braves are probably out upon the war trail."

That was evidently the truth.

The Warrior bore down boldly upon the village.

There were visible Indian women, lads and dogs, but scarcely a brave was to be seen.

Frank was for a moment undecided what to do.

It would be of no possible advantage to destroy the village. This thought was quickly dispelled.

But Walden said:

"I have an idea that we might get an inkling as to the whereabouts of Lieutenant Clarke and his men by stopping here. Shall we do it?"

"Certainly," said Frank; "but do you believe the savages will give you any information?"

"I am not sure. But we might be able to. Why not try?"

"It will do no harm."

At once the Warrior was headed for the village.

Frank did not hesitate, but boldly ran the machine into the very center of the Apache town.

The squaws and children were evidently much terrified and fled into their tepees.

What few braves remained took themselves out of the way quickly.

The Warrior had complete possession of the village. It could have been fired and destroyed easily.

But Frank was not disposed to do anything of this kind.

In the center of the collection of nomad dwellings Frank halted the Warrior.

Then Walden and Myers leaped down to the ground and entered one of the lodges.

Presently they emerged, dragging forth a bright-looking Indian lad.

Walden endeavored to catechise him. But the Indian nature asserted itself, and he would not answer.

This angered the plainsman, and he shook and threatened the lad.

But it was of no avail.

The Apache nature was not of the yielding kind. Not a word could the lad be induced to speak.

"Well, I'll be blowed!" exclaimed Walden, angrily. "I never did see such an obstinate fellow!"

"He is nerry, for a fact," said Frank.

"What shall we do, Mr. Reade?"

"I'll fix him!"

Frank went into the body of the Warrior and brought out a wire.

This was connected with the battery and dynamos. Frank applied the wire to the Indian lad's hands.

The boy's fingers closed over it. Quick as a flash Frank let the current on. The effect was comical.

At first the current did not materially affect the boy, but as it gained strength his nerves began to tingle and his hair to rise upon end.

Then his muscles began to contract. He tried to relax his grip on the wire, but was unable to do so.

Then the agony began. The torturing current threw its victim into all manner of agonizing contortions.

The Indian lad writhed and groaned with awful pain. Now was the time to break his proud spirit, if ever.

CHAPTER IX.

A BOLD RESCUE.

Barney was a most astonished man to find himself in the embrace of the prowling savage.

For a moment he was so dumfounded as to be almost unable to act, and his foe came near finishing him.

He raised a huge knife, and was about to plunge it into Barney's breast.

But the Celt caught the blade just in time.

With a powerful effort he wrenched it from his foe's grasp and threw it away.

Then followed a deadly wrestle there in the long grass.

Pomp had known nothing of the circumstance, being some distance away.

He was running rapidly, when suddenly he became conscious of the fact that Barney had stopped somewhere.

"Golly!" he muttered, "whar am dat I'ishman? Has anyfing happened to him?"

He came to a complete stop and listened.

"Hi, dar! Whar is yo' I'ish?" he cried.

No answer came back.

But Pomp could hear the distant sound of a struggle.

Instantly the truth flashed upon him.

"Golly!" he muttered; "hab dat I'ishman got into a scrape?"

At once the darky started back to Barney's assistance. As it happened, he was not a moment too soon.

Barney had tripped and fallen, and the Indian was upon him.

An exultant yell was upon the Indian's lips.

He had freed his tomahawk, and was about to dash it into Barney's brain. But at that moment Pomp arrived.

"Huh dar!" he yelled. "Wha' yo' doin' dar? G'long way!"

With which he dealt the savage a skull-cracking blow, and followed it up until he had knocked the wretch senseless.

Barney was upon his feet.

"Bejabers, yez have saved me loife!" he cried, wildly. "Shure I'll never forgit ye for that, naygur. I thought me last day had come!"

"Massy sakes! I'se jes' glad yo' didn't git killed, sah!" cried Pomp. "But I done fink we bettah git out ob dis."

"Yez are roight, naygur."

And without further heed to the senseless savage, they cut for the canyon.

This time they reached it in safety, but none too soon.

The sound of red trailers in their rear was plain, and there was no time to lose. Into the shadows of the canyon they dashed.

For some while they kept on at a rapid gait.

Then, as the sounds of pursuit died out, they slackened their pace.

They could hardly believe their good fortune. It had been a daring attempt to gain liberty from the start.

The white man who falls into the hands of the Apaches and escapes may consider himself most lucky.

"Golly!" cried Pomp, jubilantly, "we'se jes' de luckiest chilluns I knows ob."

"Yez are roight," said Barney, feeling of his scalp. "Shure, I'm makin' shure that me hair is still on, an' it's no optical delusion I'm afther havin'."

"I done fink we bettah find de Warrior now, chile."

"Yez are a level-headed naygur!" declared Barney. "I niver knew afore that yez had so much sense."

"Huh! yo'se jes' sayin' dat fo' to flattah me, chile. Don' yo' trouble yo'self to do dat any mo'."

"Niver a bit av it! Shure, I'm in roight good earnest."

Down the canyon, thus badgering each other and in high spirits, they strode.

Suddenly Barney halted.

"Whist!"

"Wha' am de mattah?"

"Wud yez listen to that?"

Both strained their hearing.

It was certain that from the distance down the canyon there came the sound of horses' hoofs.

A party of horsemen was coming up the defile.

Was it Lieutenant Clarke's men? The same thought flashed through the minds of Barney and Pomp.

But a few moments later the revelation came.

Both shrank into the deep shadows.

Nearer came the cavalcade.

Outlined against the sky the two watchers saw the plumes and topknots of a band of Indians.

It was a disappointment.

Deep in the gloom the two watchers crouched as the cavalcade passed.

But suddenly Barney clutched Pomp's arm.

"Wud yez whist!" he whispered.

"Wha' am de mattah?"

"Don't yez see?"

Pomp did see, and came near betraying himself with an audible exclamation.

The Indians were half a hundred in number.

At their head rode a tall chief. Just behind him, between two rows of savages, there rode the form of a woman.

In the dim light, her white, agonized face, upturned to Heaven, was plainly to be recognized.

There was no doubt but that it was Alma Dane, the ranchero's daughter.

The tall chief was Long Lance.

But of course neither Barney nor Pomp knew this.

They simply knew that a white girl was captive in the center of that dusky gang. It fired their souls.

"Wha' yo' fink ob dat?" asked Pomp.

"Bejabers, it's a mighty shame!" declared Barney.

"Wha' am we gwine to do?"

"Begorry, we must resky her. Aven if it takes our loives ter do it we must save that white girl."

Barney's whole chivalric soul was aroused. He was willing to risk his life and all for the unfortunate girl.

At once the two faithful servitors of Frank Reade, Jr., began to count the chances of accomplishing the rescue of Alma Dane.

Meanwhile, Long Lance and his party were filing slowly by.

Like an inspiration an idea came to Barney.

Quick as a flash he raised his rifle and fired. The horse upon which Alma was mounted fell and the young girl rolled from its back.

Instantly every Indian gave a yell, and their mustangs bolted to the other side of the canyon.

All was done in a flash of time.

Alma Dane had regained her feet instantly. Barney and Pomp fired again into the mass of savages and then dodged behind boulders.

As luck had it, the young girl retained her presence of mind.

She instinctively realized that the unknown shooters

her friends, and recovering herself, she rushed toward them.

By this time Long Lance's stentorian voice rang through the gorge.

"Fire!"

The rifles of the savages cracked.

Nothing short of a miracle saved Alma's life then.

The bullets whistled all about her like hailstones.

But a reassuring voice reached her hearing.

"Come along, miss. Shure, an' it's friends we are."

Behind a lot of bowlders she was now safe with Barney and Pomp.

In the darkness she could not recognize her rescuers. But it mattered not. She knew that their purpose was to rescue her, and that was the most she cared for.

The savages were so taken by surprise at the daring attack, that they were thrown into complete confusion.

They were unable to guess at the number of their assailants, and were otherwise much in doubt.

It was the moment to strike, and Barney and Pomp failed themselves of it.

Once again they fired into the pack of savages, and then Barney grasped Alma's wrist, saying:

"Whist, now! Come along wid me, miss; quick, for the life av yez! The red divils will be afther us full lively."

Along the wall of the canyon Barney fairly dragged the young girl.

The Celt had no idea of where he was going, except that he was putting distance between them and the redskins.

This seemed to him the most essential thing.

So he kept on rapidly until he came to a cleft in the wall.

Into it he crept, and to his amazement and joy found that it led upward, and immediately followed it.

But Pomp, in the meanwhile, had not such good fortune.

The darky had become separated from Barney in the darkness and the excitement of the fight.

Instead of following down the canyon, he became confused and went in an opposite direction.

Discovering his error, he was about to turn back, when he found that this was impossible, as the savages were rapidly closing in on him.

Pomp realized that his position had suddenly become a desperate one.

"Golly!" he muttered; "I kain't say as I jes' likes de looks ob dis!"

But he started back up the canyon as fast as his legs could carry him.

To be sure, this was directly into the enemy's camp.

Yet he had no other alternative. But the worst was yet to come.

Suddenly he heard sounds in advance, which seemed to satisfy him that the pursuers from the camp were coming.

This placed him literally between two fires, and in a most desperate position.

What was to be done?

It certainly looked to the terrified darky as if he was truly lost.

In his extremity he crept along the canyon wall until he found a good cavity in which to hide.

He crept into this, and for a time lay perfectly still.

In a few moments the canyon was full of Indians.

Long Lance's party met those from the village and an excited harangue then followed.

What it resulted in it was impossible for Pomp to tell, for the darky could not understand the Apache tongue.

He kept low and quiet. After a time the Apaches disappeared down the canyon, evidently having given up the quest.

Pomp was now in a quandary what to do.

Of course his natural impulse was to rejoin Barney and Alma, but he did not know where to look for them.

He crept on down the canyon to the spot where he had last seen them.

But no trace of them was to be seen.

For aught he knew they might have fallen again into the hands of the redskins.

The darky was at sea.

"I jes' don' know what to do nohow!" he muttered. "I reckon I bettah get out ob dis place jes' as quick as I can."

He proceeded to do this.

Following the canyon down, he finally emerged from it. He was now determined, if possible, to find Frank Reade, Jr., and the Warrior.

CHAPTER X.

HORS DU COMBAT.

Certainly the little Indian lad had good pluck in withstanding the pain of the electric current so long.

Frank turned the current on a little harder.

The little fellow writhed and twisted in agony.

"You'd better come to terms, my lad," said Walden. "It will be the worse for you if you don't."

"Pale face stop—no hurt more—me tell!" cried the boy.

Frank shut off part of the current.

But there was still enough left so that the boy could not release his hands from the wire.

He was still a prisoner.

He became sullen again.

No amount of persuasion could induce him to say a word.

"He hasn't had enough," said Frank: "take a little more."

And he turned on the current.

This resulted in breaking the boy's spirit.

He came down completely and promised to tell the truth.

"Big chief, he gone to find white man," he declared.

"Gone on warpath to find sojers. Big fight! Kill quick!"

"Yes, but in what direction has he gone?" asked Walden, anxiously.

The boy pointed to the north.

"Sojers over there," he said, confidently; "heap big fight over there."

And this was all that could be got out of him in that respect.

It was learned, however, that Long Lance had no prisoners.

"I am afraid that my people at the ranch are all dead," said Walden, dejectedly.

"That does not follow," said Frank.

"Why?"

"Because in all probability Long Lance has not returned yet."

This had not occurred to Walden. It gave him fresh courage.

"I hope you are right," he said, warmly. "You are certainly a great comforter, Mr. Reade."

The Indian boy was released and given a reward.

Then the Warrior once more started on the trail.

The direction was taken as indicated by the Indian boy, and for an hour or two the Warrior kept on.

Then suddenly, as the end of the valley seemed near at hand, Walden, who was on the forward platform, cried:

"Mr. Reade, I hear distant sounds of firing."

"You do?" cried Frank.

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Listen!"

Frank did so. From the direction of the higher hills he heard plainly the rattle of fire-arms.

It seemed to indicate that a fight was going on over there, and instantly all were interested.

"We ought to investigate," said Myers.

"You are right," agreed Walden.

"But that is not so easy," said Frank. "How will we get over there?"

This did not seem easy.

But after some search, a defile was found which finally led out into a mountain pass.

The distant firing had ceased.

Frank was not sure that this pass would take him to the scene, but he was disposed to try it.

Accordingly up the pass the Warrior ran.

For over a mile the machine ran on over the hard stone floor. Then suddenly open country unfolded itself.

Ten minutes later the occupants of the Warrior beheld the cliff houses, just as Barney and Pomp had done.

Also the Apache encampment.

"Hurrah!" cried Myers, "we have found the nest at last!"

"You're right," agreed Bent. "I'll bet we find our men here."

There was no doubt in Frank's mind now but that this was really the stronghold of Black Cloud.

If Barney and Pomp were captives here he must rescue them.

The young inventor was not a little excited.

He stayed at the wheel, regulating the speed of the Warrior.

"What will we do, Mr. Reade?" asked Walden, with some apprehension. "Are you going to attack them?"

"Certainly," replied Frank.

"But——"

"What?"

"There are hundreds of them here, and a fight at close quarters is to be avoided, is it not?"

"With my electric gun I can blow them into powder!" declared Frank.

"Do you believe it?"

"I know it."

"All right. I have full faith in your discretion, Mr. Reade."

Frank sent the Warrior forward at a fair rate of speed.

A few Apaches concealed in the bushes about fired at the machine.

But the news had spread to the Indian town, and had created a most tremendous excitement.

The Apaches all flocked to arms and opened fire upon the Warrior.

The battle was begun.

Frank's tactics were shrewd and at the same time direct.

He was not disposed to waste any time or words with the wretches.

He knew that a parley could end in no possible good.

A quick, strong blow would bring them to terms and nothing else.

So Frank quickly brought the Warrior to a point from whence he could train the gun upon the town.

"Are you going to give 'em a shot?" asked Walden.

"Yes."

"But had we better not first open a little parley with them?"

"Never!" replied Frank, determinedly. "It would only convince them that we feared them. Never offer compromise with an Apache. Surrender or die!"

Walden brought the palms of his hands together vigorously.

"Upon my word, I believe you are right!" he cried, earnestly. "I like your pluck."

Frank trained the gun upon the Indian town and his finger was upon the electric key.

He pressed it, and there was an explosion most terrific. But the projectile had passed over the tepees and struck the wall of the cliff just beyond.

The aim had been accurate, but a slight movement of the Warrior had deranged it so that the projectile had gone wide.

There was a terrific explosion, which shattered great fragments from the cliffs.

But the explosion had alarmed the Apaches, and they came swarming out in great numbers.

"It will give them a good lesson," muttered Frank.

He brought the Warrior about now, and ran for a higher position some distance away.

But in crossing a flat track, he suddenly, but too late, saw a small quagmire into which the Warrior the next moment plunged.

And the forward wheels sank to the hubs in the soft mire.

In vain Frank tried to back the machine out.

There it stuck fast.

It would go neither one way nor the other. All effort was of no avail.

The situation was certainly a hard one.

"By cracky!" cried Myers, "we are in a bad scrape now. What will we do, Mr. Reade?"

"There is but one thing," said Frank, grimly.

"What?"

"Fight it out."

"But they will whip us. They outnumber us five hundred to one."

"I don't think they will want to venture many times within range of the electric gun," he declared.

Then a chill struck him.

In that moment he beheld a most appalling fact. The electric gun was in such a position that it could not be used.

The muzzle was deep in the mud.

To attempt to extricate was out of the question just then.

The red foes were too near at hand.

There was but one way to act, and this was to hold the foe at bay as long as possible with their rifles.

The Indians were swarming everywhere. In the bushes, behind boulders, everywhere they were, and pouring a volley into the Warrior at every turn.

Of course the bullets could not harm the occupants of the Warrior.

But it was impossible for them to go outside to help extricate the Warrior out of the mire.

Should any one show themselves outside the steel shell, death would have been their certain portion.

Frank Reade, Jr., was for the time completely in a quandary.

The faces of all were pale and rigid. Certain death confronted them.

There seemed to be no possible way to prevent the red foe from completely overrunning the electric invention, destroying it, and killing all on board.

Four men, armed only with Winchesters, could not hope to cope long with such a large number of savages.

With the electric gun it might have been done.

But Frank Reade, Jr.'s inventive genius once more came to the front.

He went into the dynamo room and came out with a big coil of wire.

Very quickly he explained to the others what he desired to have done. His directions were quickly followed.

The wire was thrown out and passed several times in a circle about the Warrior.

Then Frank connected them with the dynamos and turned on the full force of the current.

The savages were not slow to note the position of the Warrior and embrace the situation.

They believed that their dreaded foe was at their mercy and came on full force and with loud yells of triumph.

"Steady, boys!" cried Frank. "Give it to them!"

The four brave defenders of the Warrior poured volley after volley into the ranks of the Indians.

But the surging mass of savages, hundreds in number, were not to be checked.

They came on in a plunging crowd, firing at the Warrior and throwing their lances and tomahawks against the steel shell.

But the next-moment they came in contact with the electric wires.

The result was thrilling.

The terrible force of the electric current was something appalling. Those in front were fairly hurled back as by the power of a literal giant.

Not one could cross the fearful line of death. Some were killed outright by the shock and others were stunned and

rendered unconscious. In less than three minutes several hundred Indians were piled in a heap about the Warrior.

CHAPTER XI.

FIGHT WITH A PUMA.

Barney and Alma Dane crept up the path which led up from the canyon with all haste.

It was the means of their salvation.

Luck was with them, for the savages did not pursue them. A few moments later they came out in a higher ravine and which seemed to lead deeper into the hills.

Here Alma's strength gave out and she was obliged to rest.

"Thank God!" she breathed, sinking down upon a flat shelf of rock. "Rescue has come at last! Oh, sir, to whom am I indebted for this service?"

"Shure, miss," said Barney, gallantly, "ye're not indebted at all. It's only a pleasure, to be shure."

"You are very kind."

"Me name is Barney O'Shea, miss, at your service."

"Do—do you know my father, Henry Dane, of the Ranch Above the Clouds?"

"Shure, an' I do not that, miss," replied Barney, "but I think I've heard me masther tell av that same gentleman."

"Who is your master?" asked the young girl.

"Misther Frank 'Reade, Jr."

"I do not know him."

"Beggorra, an' that's quare!" cried Barney, with surprise. "Shure, I thought iverybody in the worruld knew Frank Reade, Jr."

"The name sounds familiar," said Alma, thoughtfully.

"Oh, I think I have it. Is he not a famous inventor?"

"Yez have hit it roight, miss," said Barney.

"Then I have heard of him. Is he near here?"

"Shure, an' I've been thryin' to foind him an' the Warrior."

"The Warrior?"

"Yis, miss."

"What is that?"

"Shure, an' it's wan av his wondherful invintions, miss. It's loike a foine carriage, with a cover an' foine apartments on the inside. An' it goes by electricity."

"Why, how splendid!" cried Alma, clapping her hands. "I should so like to see it."

"That ye may, miss, if I kin foind Misther Frank, which same I am hopin' to do. Av we kin foind the Warrior, then we kin laugh at the Injuns!"

"Then let us find it by all means," cried the young girl, starting up. "But wait; can you tell me of my father? He

was away with a party of men trying to break through the besieging line when the ranch was fired. Oh, God! I trust he was not killed!"

A look of agony passed over the young girl's face.

"Shure an' I hope not, miss," said Barney, earnestly. "Maybe he has fallen in with Lieutenant Clarke, an'——"

"Lieutenant Clarke!" almost screamed the young girl. "Is he here in the Los Pesos Hills?"

"He with all av his soldiers; ivery wan."

"God be praised!" she cried, joyfully. "Then faithful Lariat Luke reached the fort after all. But, alas! it is too late to save the ranch."

Barney's eyes twinkled.

He understood well the sudden animation and fresh spirit of the young girl. He was a keen fellow, this brave-hearted Celt.

After a brief rest Alma rose and they went on.

Up the defile they climbed for hours. Barney had not the slightest idea where he was, but Alma said:

"If daylight will ever come, I think I can tell where we are easily."

But daylight was slow in coming.

Finally, however, the first gray light began to appear in the east.

It was a relief after long hours of nerve tension, and somewhat exhausted, the young girl was obliged to sink down.

Even Barney was somewhat exhausted. Fortunately the Celt remembered a bottle of good whiskey which he carried in his pocket.

He produced it, saying:

"Shure, miss, it's a drop av the crayther as will fix yez all roight. Will yez have it?"

Alma thanked him and drank some of the liquor.

It revived her greatly, and she was soon able to regain her feet.

"We are not far from Pinnacle Pass," she said. "By following that we might reach the ranch."

"Yis, miss," said Barney; "but, shure, an' phwat good would that do us if it is burned down entoiirely?"

"Very little, I fear," she said, with a sigh; "but perhaps from there we may decide upon a course. It is not impossible that we may find friends there."

Barney agreed that this was true, and they pressed on.

But as they were skirting a small eminence a thrilling thing happened.

There was a sudden loud roar and a peculiar hiss, and Barney gave a backward leap.

"Mither Mary preserve us!" he gasped. "Shure, an'

"Awat the divil may it be? Git behoind me, miss, fer yer life!"

A monster animal was crouching upon the ground directly in Barney's path, and not fifty yards away.

It required but a second glance for Barney to see that it was as a huge specimen of the mountain lion or panther peculiar to the Rocky Mountain region.

He was a giant of his species, and was evidently right in fighting mood.

Crouched upon the ground, it growled at Barney fiercely, and made a movement as if to spring forward.

The Celt's rifle was instantly at his shoulder.

A scream broke from Alma.

"Shure, miss, don't yez be a bit afraid," cried the brave Irishman. "I'll niver let the beast hurt yez."

Just as the words left his lips, the beast sprang for Barney.

Straight at him he came. The brave Celt pulled the trigger.

Crack!

The bullet struck the animal's skull just over the eye, and for a moment stunned it. It tumbled in a heap and scrambled up in a dazed, confused way.

Before Barney could again fire at the panther it was upon him.

The Celt had just time to draw his knife and slash at the animal.

Fortunately the keen blade struck a vital part and the panther's grip relaxed. There were several stinging wounds from its claws in Barney's shoulders.

The Celt followed up his advantage quickly and the next blow nearly disemboweled the animal.

The battle was ended.

By Barney's pluck and cool work he had gained the victory.

The panther lay stretched at full length upon the ground. Alma had with difficulty kept from fainting.

She now came forward solicitously.

"Oh, I hope you are not hurt!" she cried, anxiously.

"Divil a bit, miss," replied Barney, bluntly. "Only a few scratches, an' shure I don't moind thim."

The Celt gave the dead panther a kick with his foot and remarked:

"Shure, he'll niver do any more harrum. Well, miss, I think we'll be afther goin'."

But at that moment a distant, strange sound came to Barney's ears.

He listened intently.

Presently he distinguished it quite plainly. It was the rattle of fire-arms.

The sound was far off. No doubt a fight was on.

But where was it? Who were the fighters? These questions Barney asked himself. Then he said:

"Shure, miss, it's a foight, and maybe it is the leftenant an' his min foighting wid the Ingins."

"Let us go to the scene at once!" cried the young girl, with sudden color rising in her face.

"All roight, miss; but are yez not a bit tired?"

"No, I am quite strong. Let us go at once. Fear not for me."

"All roight."

They set out at once with all haste in the direction of the firing. As they went on it became evident that it was further away from them than they had thought.

Moreover, it seemed to be receding all the while.

The small foot-hills now began to give way to a mighty expanse of forest.

This covered many square miles of a nearly level tract. At this juncture a small river flowed through the forest.

The underbrush was very dense.

Indeed, it was almost impenetrable, and it quickly became evident that a woman could hardly hope to struggle through it.

Here was a dilemma.

What was to be done?

The firing now became plainer than ever and seemed to come from a point straight down the river. Barney concluded that a varying wind was the cause of this.

"Bejabers, I don't see but phwat we are sthuck!" he exclaimed.

Alma in vain tried to force a way through the undergrowth.

But it was of no avail.

However, Barney's fertile brain quickly conceived an expedient.

"Shure, an' we'll not be beat!" he declared. "There is a way to git out av it, an' bejabers, I have it!"

"What is it?" asked Alma, eagerly.

"Whist, now, an' I'll tell ye."

Barney went down to the water's edge. Some logs lay upon the bank of the stream.

He rolled these into the water. Then he cut some withes on the bank, and with them bound the logs together.

This made quite a respectable raft. He turned to Alma and said:

"Shure, an' we'll niver be beat. Don't yez forgit that!"

"Splendid!" cried the young girl. "Will it support us both?"

"Of coorse it will. Jist wait wan moment, me lady. Av

yez will git onto the raft an' howld it with this pole, I'll show yez phwat I mean."

Alma at once complied.

She stepped onto the raft. Barney sprang upon the bank.

The Celt proceeded to cut down a tall sapling with his knife. He evidently wished it for a pole to propel the raft with.

While at work on this, however, a thrilling thing happened.

The strong current caught the end of the raft and swung it out into midstream. In vain Alma tried to stop it.

The force of the current nearly twisted her overboard.

"Help—help!" she cried. "Oh, come to me, quick!"

"Shure, an' that I will, miss!" cried Barney, starting for the raft.

But before he could reach it a startling thing happened. There was a wild chorus of yells, and from the woods on two sides there sprang a band of painted Apaches.

With fierce yells they started for the Celt.

Barney saw that if he started for the shore he would expose himself to be shot down.

There was no alternative but to step into the deep underbrush in his rear.

Rifle bullets whistled about him, while with horror he saw the raft drifting down the river with helpless Alma Dane upon it. He was powerless to stop it.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FOREST FIRE.

The electric wires did their work well, and were really the means of repulsing the savages.

Heaps of the stunned Apaches lay about the Warrior.

The others, seeing the mysterious fate of their comrades, were slow to come on.

They had made a desperate but vain effort to reach the Warrior and failed.

It was in keeping with Indian nature to now retreat.

They withdrew to a respectful distance and a desultory fire was kept up.

For over an hour this lasted. Then Myers cried:

"Look! What is up?"

This was indeed a puzzler.

There seemed to be some great commotion among the Indians. A tall chief had arrived, and was giving excited commands.

What it meant puzzled the party on the Warrior for some time.

Then it became evident that the Apaches were about to give up their attack on the Warrior.

The reason for this was quickly made apparent.

The distant sound of fire-arms was to be plainly heard.

"Hurrah!" cried Frank Reade, Jr., wildly. "It is Clarke and his men, and they are coming just in the nick of time."

"Three cheers for the lieutenant!" cried Myers, with enthusiasm.

"The battle is not lost yet."

"Not if we can only get the Warrior out of this mud."

"We can do that," replied Frank, confidently. "Just wait until the coast is clear."

In less than ten minutes after the arrival of the tall chief the Apaches were all on the move.

As soon as the coast was clear Frank stepped down from the Warrior.

He procured a long steel rope and passed it about a distant tree, hitching the other end to the windlass on the platform of the machine.

Slowly but surely the Warrior was lifted out of the quagmire.

Out upon the level ground it was pulled. Then the party gave cheers.

The mud was scraped from the running gear, and then Frank cried:

"All aboard!"

The Warrior once more started in pursuit of the Apaches.

As the village came in view, Frank saw that his surmise was correct.

Clarke's party had boldly invaded the stronghold of Black Cloud, and a terrible battle was in progress.

At that distance Frank hardly dared to use the electric gun for fear of killing some of the soldiers.

But he kept on until quite near to the exciting scene.

Then he saw a couple of officers upon a slight eminence near.

One of them Frank recognized at once. It was no other than Clarke.

Reining up his horse he dropped from the saddle and rushed forward, crying:

"Is it you, Mr. Reade? Hurrah! We shall whip the foe now!"

"You are right—we will whip them," cried Frank, springing down and grasping the young lieutenant's hand. "I am glad to see you."

"The same," replied Clarke, warmly.

"I suppose you have a tight battle on?"

"Yes; my handful of men are hardly able to cope with so many of the foe."

"I'll help you out."

"Good! Your electric gun ought to clear the way."

"It shall."

Then they briefly exchanged notes. Clarke was very pale and much distressed.

"Ah, I fear it is all up!" he groaned. "If Alma is in the power of Long Lance, I shiver to think of her fate."

"Keep up courage," said Frank. "We will save her yet."

The cavalry were having a hard battle with the Apaches.

The latter, realizing that the advantage was theirs, fought desperately, and tried to overwhelm their white foes.

They might have succeeded in doing so had it not been for the electric Warrior.

Frank trained the electric gun quickly, and sent a projectile into the midst of the Apaches.

Another and another was sent, and the Apaches, inspired with fearful terror, made a break for the cover of the cliffs.

The victorious whites pursued, and a running fight was indulged in.

Frank did not deem it necessary to pursue with the Warrior. He remained in consultation with Clarke.

"What do you think has become of Barney and Pomp?" asked the lieutenant.

"Indeed, I am at a loss to know," replied Frank. "It is beyond my best conception. I fear that they have been killed by the savages."

The Apache village was hastily searched. But nothing was found which could give even the faintest clew.

The Apaches, thoroughly beaten, had retreated into the hills.

It was now a question as to what move it was best to pursue. While in this quandary a sudden outcry was heard.

Frank and the lieutenant turned quickly, and the latter cried:

"Upon my word! Is not that your colored man, Frank?"

The young inventor gazed in the direction indicated and a sharp cry escaped his lips.

"Pomp!" he exclaimed; "this is too good for belief!"

Running with all speed toward the Warrior was Pomp.

"Pomp!" cried Frank, joyfully, "this is good fortune. You have come back all safe!"

"Bress de Lor' fo' dat!" cried the ducky.

"But—where is Barney?"

"I done spec he am all safe, sah, somewhar wid de lady what we rescued from Long Lance an' his gang."

"What is that?" cried Clarke.

"It am de lady yo' am lookin' fo', sah, fo' a suttin fac'."

"Alma!" cried Clarke, wildly. "Where is she, Pomp? Tell us all about it."

Pomp caught his breath, and then went on to tell his story.

When he had finished Clarke cried:

"To saddle, all! We must find them at all costs. Scour

the hills everywhere. They may fall again into the hands of the Apaches if we don't work quick."

Quickly the soldiers were on the move. Pomp led the way as guide.

A cut was made through the hills, until finally the verge of a mighty track of forest was reached.

It was impossible for the Warrior to enter this.

So it was decided that the horsemen should go forward through a bridle path, by which Pomp himself had come.

The Warrior was to await here the return of the party.

Clarke and Pomp rode in the van of the cavalcade.

Then they came to the banks of a swift-flowing river.

They were about to ford this when a peculiar sound came to the ears of all.

At first it seemed like the distant booming of thunder.

But one of the soldiers was sniffing the air.

"Lieutenant," he said, touching his hat, "I think I can smell fire."

"Fire?"

What was to be done?

If the woods were on fire it would be folly to go ahead.

Indeed, it would be equivalent to certain death.

But something had to be done at once. This was certain.

The lieutenant quickly made up his mind.

"We will go forward as far as we can," he declared, "and then if we are compelled to do so we can turn back."

"Right," said one of the men.

So the party went forward.

The thunder of the flames was most frightful to them.

Finally the smoke became so dense that they could go no further.

Then a halt was called.

Lieutenant Clarke was satisfied that it would be folly to keep on. So he gave the order:

"About face!"

They were obliged to go at no slow pace, and in the course of time came to the river once more.

But here a thrilling sight rewarded them.

The woods upon the opposite side were literally in flames. To get across was out of the question.

The party looked at each other in an appalled manner. They were literally hemmed in by the devouring flames.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE END.

Barney's horror was intense as he saw the raft drifting down the river with the helpless Alma Dane upon it.

But Alma, though terribly frightened, was quite calm. She clung to the drifting logs bravely.

Barney had time to shout:

"Howld on, miss! Be me sowl, I'll thry an' help yez out av the scrape!"

Then the plucky Irishman again opened fire on the savages.

His aim was deadly, and he worked the Winchester so well that he kept the Indians at bay.

Seizing his first opportunity, he rushed deeper into the woods.

It was his hope to give the Apaches the slip. In this he was more successful than he had dared hope.

For some reason or other the savages suddenly abandoned the chase.

Realizing this, Barney made a quick course for the bank of the river.

He reached it and saw the log raft some distance below slowly drifting down the stream.

Alma waved her arms wildly, and Barney cried:

"Kape up your courage, miss. Shure, I'm comin to yez."

And the plucky Celt leaped into the water and swam to the raft.

Clambering aboard, for hours they drifted down the river. Suddenly Barney heard a loud, roaring sound, and the smell of smoke was in the air.

With something like terror, the Celt realized that the forest was on fire.

"Howly Mither!" he gasped. "If the fire iver reaches us we're done for!"

The river was not so broad that they could hope to escape the terrible heat, which would be fatal.

Then suddenly, as the raft turned a bend in the river, a crowd of men were seen upon the bank some distance below.

They wore United States uniforms, and Barney cried:

"On me loife, there is Pomp, the naygur, and a hull lot of sogers!"

With this the Celt set up a loud cry. It was answered, and not many minutes later the party was united.

Pomp and Barney were embracing each other, and Lieutenant Clarke held Alma in his arms.

It was a joyful meeting.

"My darling!" said the young lieutenant. "We shall never be separated again."

Explanations were quickly made, and then a plan of escape from the flames was found.

The river was waded up its course for a distance of two miles. Then a new path was found through the forest.

A few hours later, and just before sunset, the party reached the electric Warrior.

Here it was discovered that Henry Dane and four of his men had turned up safe and well. Joy was upon all sides.

Pomp and Barney relieved Myers and Bent on board the Warrior.

The next day the victorious party set out for Fort High Rock.

The Los Pesos Hills were left behind, and in due course the fort was safely reached.

Nothing was seen of the Apaches. The electric gun had given them a lesson so severe that they would not soon recover from it.

At the fort a grand jubilee was indulged in. Frank Reade, Jr., and his wonderful invention were given a great ovation.

"We owe all our success and happiness to you, Mr. Reade!" said Clarke, warmly.

"Indeed we do," said Alma, with a twinkle of her brown eyes.

"If you will only give us help, we will relieve this region of its curse," continued the lieutenant. "The Apaches shall be all wiped out."

"Impossible," replied Frank, politely. "I have already a new invention in mind which I must go home and perfect."

"What is it like?"

"That I prefer not to say as yet. You shall know in due course of time."

A few weeks later saw Frank Reade, Jr., Barney and Pomp, safe in Readestown. There the young inventor went to work upon a new wonder, which we may tell the reader about at some future day.

THE END.

Read "FRANK READE, JR., AND HIS ELECTRIC AIR-BOAT; OR, HUNTING WILD BEASTS FOR A CIRCUS," which will be the next number (10th) of "Frank Reade Weekly."

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.... " " THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76, Nos.....
.... " " Ten-Cent Hand Books, Nos.....

Name.....Street and No.....Town.....State.....